

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /078 W
-----281747Z 012207 /43

R 281100Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3832
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

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E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GE, GW
SUBJECT: SED DOCUMENT ON BIERMANN OUSTER

REF: BERLIN 7223

SUMMARY: CONCERN TO PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCIPIENT "PRAGUE SPRING" IN THE GDR AND BIERMANN'S USE OF HIS STAY IN THE FRG TO POLEMICIZE AGAINST THE GDR WERE MAJOR ELEMENTS IN THE REGIME'S DECISION TO OUST HIM. THE REGIME ANTICIPATED AN INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY, CALCULATING IT WOULD BE SHORT-LIVED, AND ALLEGEDLY ALSO DOMESTIC CRITICISM AGAINST BIERMANN'S OUSTER. IT WAS IRRITATED WITH THE SIGNERS OF THE NOVEMBER 17 PROTEST LETTER BECAUSE, IN PART, THEY DID NOT DEFEND THE GDR AGAINST BIERMANN'S ATTACK. THE REGIME IS INSISTING THAT THOSE "DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY" INVOLVED TAKE A POSITION ON THE ISSUE, BUT SUGGESTS NO HARSH PROFESSIONAL PUNISHMENT WILL ENSUE. THESE APPEAR TO BE THE MAIN POINTS OF AN SED DOCUMENT ON BIERMANN'S OUSTER WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SED DOCUMENT, WHICH WE TAKE TO BE GENUINE, WAS TO
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BE USED AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSING BIERMANN'S OUSTER
WITH SED MEMBERS OF THE "CENTRAL ORGANS OF THE TRADE UNIONS."
IT IS BASED ON A MEETING SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE
MEMBER AND BERLIN REGIONAL SECRETARY ROLAND BAUER HELD
ON NOVEMBER 19 WITH FIRST SECRETARIES OF BERLIN DISTRICT
SED ORGANIZATIONS. THE DOCUMENT IS DATED NOVEMBER 19,

AND SHOULD BE TREATED WITH DISCRETION AND NO MENTION
MADE OF THE FACT WE HAVE IT.

2. THE DOCUMENT IS NOTEWORTHY FOR THE POINTS THE PARTY
WISHED TO STRESS AS THE REASONS FOR BIERMANN'S OUSTER
AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT INTENDED TO HANDLE DOMESTIC
REPERCUSSIONS TO ITS MOVE. IT ALSO PROVIDES, IN A SENSE,
A BENCHMARK TO MEASURE HOW FAR THE REGIME MAY FEEL
COMPELLED TO MOVE AWAY FROM ITS INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF
HOW FIRMLY TO TREAT RECALCITRANT MEMBERS OF THE GDR
CULTURAL WORLD.

NO PRAGUE SPRING WANTED HERE

3. ON THE REASONS FOR BIERMANN'S OUSTER, THE DOCUMENT
NOTES, AS DID PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY GDR MEDIA, HIS USE
OF THE FRG TO HEAP CLUMNY ON THE GDR. IT ASSERTS THAT
BIERMANN COULD HAVE USED THE COLOGNE CONCERT TO PROVE
HIMSELF AS A COMMUNIST BUT CLAIMS THAT INSTEAD HE
OPENLY "INCITED" AGAINST THE GDR. ACCORDING TO THE
DOCUMENT, BIERMANN USED THE CONCERT "ACTIVELY" TO STRIVE
FOR CHANGES IN SOCIALISM IN THE GDR. FIFTEEN OF THE
TWENTY-ONE SONGS WERE DIRECTED AGAINST THE GDR. HIS AIM
IN THESE SONGS AND COMMENTARY, THROUGH "HALF-RIGHT WING"
AND "HALF-LEFT WING" SLOGANS, WAS TO STIMULATE A
"SO-CALLED PRAGUE SPRING" IN THE GDR. FOR THESE REASONS,
ACCORDING TO THE DOCUMENT, THE PARTY DECIDED ON
NOVEMBER 16 TO DEPRIVE BIERMANN OF HIS GDR CITIZENSHIP.

5. THERE IS, AT THE SAME TIME, EVIDENCE IN THE DOCUMENT
TO SUGGEST THAT THE REGIME, IN PERMITTING BIERMANN TO
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TRAVEL TO THE FRG, REALIZED BEFOREHAND THAT SOME ACTION
PROBABLY WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN AGAINST HIM. EVIDENTLY
RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS OF WHETHER THE DECISION WAS
NECESSARY OR WHETHER IT DAMAGED THE GDR MORE THAN IT
HELPED, THE DOCUMENT ASSERTS THERE WERE THREE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE REGIME. FIRST, HE COULD HAVE BEEN DENIED
PERMISSION TO GO, WHICH WOULD HAVE CAUSED A SHARPENED
HATE CAMPAIGN BY THE CLASS ENEMY; SECOND, HE COULD HAVE
BEEN PERMITTED TO RETURN, "AFTER WHICH BIERMANN WOULD
HAVE HAD TO HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED" BY THE REGIME --
WHICH ALSO WOULD HAVE LED TO A HATE CAMPAIGN; OR,
THIRD, HE COULD HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF HIS CITIZENSHIP,
WHICH WOULD RESULT IN A SHORT, SHARP IDEOLOGICAL
ARGUMENT. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE WHO PROVIDED THE
DOCUMENT, A FOURTH ALTERNATIVE WAS SUGGESTED BY THOSE
WHO HEARD THE BAUER EXPLANATION, I.E., DO NOTHING.
THIS WAS REJECTED AS UNACCEPTABLE BECAUSE BIERMANN
WOULD THEN BE FREE TO SPREAD HIS "PRAGUE SPRING" IDEAS.

FAULTS OF THE LETTER SIGNERS AND CORRECTIVE STEPS

5. WITHOUT ANY DIRECT ELABORATION, THE DOCUMENT ASSERTS THAT THE REGIME ALSO EXPECTED IDEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS FROM "CERTAIN CIRCLES" IN THE GDR. THIS IS CONTRARY TO THE VIEW GENERALLY HELD AMONG WESTERN DIPLOMATES HERE THAT THE REGIME WAS SURPRISED BY THE LEVEL AND EXTENT OF REACTION BY PARTS OF THE GDR CULTURAL WORLD. IN DISCUSSING THE ACTIONS OF THOSE WHO SIGNED THE NOVEMBER 17 LETTER PROTESTING BIERMANN'S OUSTER, THE DOCUMENT NOTES TOW GENERAL FAILINGS ON THEIR PART: (1) THEY DID NOT SAY IN WHAT WAYS THEY DISTANCED THEMSELVES FROM BIERMANN'S WORKS, AND (2) THEY DID NOT DEFEND THE GDR AGAINST HIS "MACHINATIONS." IN ADDITION THE DOCUMENT POINTS OUT THAT THE LETTER WAS GIVEN BY THE SIGNERS TO CERTAIN WESTERN CIRCLES AT THE SAME TIME IT WAS BEING GIVEN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND EDITOR JOACHIM HERMANN. THIS ACTION IS TERMED NOTEWORTHY AND UNTIL NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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NEW."

6. AS A RESPONSE TO THE SITUATION, THE DOCUMENT STATES THAT "DIFFERENTIATED" DISCUSSIONS ARE TAKING PLACE WITH THE SIGNERS IN ORDER TO FIND OUT WHY THEY ACTED AS THEY DID. ALTHOUGH THE DOCUMENT ASSERTS THAT NO "SPECIAL CAMPAIGN" WILL BE CARRIED OUT AGAINST THE SIGNERS AND THAT THE REGIME IS NOT CHANGING ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ACTIVITY OF THE SIGNERS, IT ALSO STATES THAT "ALL THOSE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED" MUST TAKE A POSITION. IN THIS CONNECTION, IT ASSERTS THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT DISCUSSIONS MUST BE HELD WITH THOSE WHO COULD BE "POTENTIAL" SIGNERS. AND THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THE REGIME KNOWS WHO THEY ARE OR COULD BE.

7. FINALLY, THE DOCUMENT MAKES REFERENCE TO SLOGANS CALLING FOR A DEMONSTRATION IN SUPPORT OF BIERMANN ON NOVEMBER 21 AT ALEXANDERPLATZ, BUT NOTES THAT THE "APPROPRIATE ORGANS" ARE READY. WE HAD HEARD OF SLOGANS ON WALLS IN FAVOR OF BIERMANN WHICH WERE QUICKLY REMOVED, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST WE HAD HEARD OF A POSSIBLE DEMONSTRATION. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE WAS NO DEMONSTRATION.

8. COMMENT: APART FROM SUPPORTING THE GENERALLY-HELD VIEW THAT BIERMANN WAS OUSTED BECAUSE HE USED THE FRG TO ATTACK THE GDR, THE MOST NOTEWORTHY ASPECTS OF THE DOCUMENT ARE THE CONCERN ABOUT AN INCIPIENT "PRAGUE SPRING" AND THE REGIME'S APPROACH ON HOW TO HANDLE

THOSE IN THE CULTURAL WORLD WHO DISAGREED WITH ITS DECISION. IT IS EVIDENT THE REGIME INTENDS TO CONDUCT A THOROUGH, BUT LOW-KEY CAMPAIGN TO BRING POTENTIAL TROUBLE MAKERS IN LINE, AS OF THE DATE OF THIS DOCUMENT, THE REGIME DID NOT WISH TO APPEAR TO BE THREATENING PEOPLE WITH THE LOSS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL

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LIVELIHOOD, WHILE SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS, SUCH AS THE OUSTER FROM THE SED OF WRITERS JUREK BECKER AND GERHARD WOLF AND THE EMIGRATION OF THOMAS BRASCH, KATHERINE THALBACH, AND NINA HAGEN, ARE NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE STAND IN THE DOCUMENT, THESE ACTIONS DO INDICATE THE REGIME IS PREPARED TO TAKE DECISIVE, VARIED MEASURES TO PREVENT THE EMERGENCE OF A "PRAGE SPRING" IN THE GDR.

9. COPY OF DOCUMENT BEING POUCHED TO EUR/CE-JOHN WARD.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPULSION, PARTY LINE, DOCUMENTS, ARTISTS, WRITERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BERLIN07348
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760474-0149
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976128/aaaaagle.tel
Line Count: 192
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BERLIN 7223
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SED DOCUMENT ON BIERMANN OUSTER
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GC, GE, SED, (BIERMANN, WOLF)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006